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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/829,380	04/22/2004	Atsuhiro Hayashi	H-1139	7082
24956	7590	04/11/2006	EXAMINER	
MATTINGLY, STANGER, MALUR & BRUNDIDGE, P.C. 1800 DIAGONAL ROAD SUITE 370 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			LAM, TUAN THIEU	
		ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER	
		2816		

DATE MAILED: 04/11/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary**Application No.**

10/829,380

Applicant(s)

HAYASHI ET AL.

Examiner

Tuan T. Lam

Art Unit

2816

*-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --***Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 February 2006.
2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-13 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) 14-27 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) Claim(s) 1-13 is/are rejected.
7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) The drawing(s) filed on 22 April 2004 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

This is a response to the amendment filed 2/27/2006, claims 1-13 are under examination.

Claims 14-27 have been withdrawn from consideration.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 1-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 1, the recitation of "capable of" is not a positive limitation. It is unclear as to if the first and second control means are or are not performing independently of each other. Therefore, the metes and bounds of the claim can not be determined.

Claims 2-13 are indefinite because of the technical deficiencies of claim 1.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

2. Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Mooney et al. (USP 6,744,287). Figure 6 of Mooney et al. shows a semiconductor integrated circuit

comprising an output circuit comprising a plural output MOSFETS (307, 309), a first control means (means to generate En0, En0/, En1, EN1/, EN2, EN2/, EN3, EN3/) that, from among the plural output MOSFETS, selects the number of output MOSFETS to be turned on to control output impedance; and a second control means (means to generate TAP0 to TAP3) that controls a slew rate by controlling a drive signal of the output MOSFETS turned on, wherein the first and second control means are performing independently of each other as called for in claims 1-3, 7-8.

Regarding claim 4, figure 5 shows the predriver buffer as logic gates 306 and 308.

Regarding claims 5-6, figure 6 shows the resistor elements connected in series with each of the output MOSFETS having resistance value greater than the on resistance of the output MOSFETS.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Sine et al. (USP 6,366,867). Figure 2 of Sine et al. shows a semiconductor integrated circuit comprising an output circuit comprising a plural output MOSFETS (252, 254), a first control means (means to generate PRON and NRON) that, from among the plural output MOSFETS, selects the number of output MOSFETS to be turned on to control output impedance; and a second control means (means to generate PSLEW and NSLEW) that controls a slew rate by controlling a drive signal of the output MOSFETS turned on, wherein the first and second control means are performing independently of each other as called for in claims 1-3.

Regarding claim 4, figure 2 shows the predriver buffer as 232 to 232N, 242 to 242N).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 9-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mooney et al. (USP 6,744,287).

Figure 6 of Mooney et al. shows a semiconductor integrated circuit comprising an output circuit comprising a plural output MOSFETS (307, 309), a first control means (means to generate En0, En0/, En1, EN1/, EN2, EN2/, EN3, EN3/) that, from among the plural output MOSFETS, selects the number of output MOSFETS to be turned on to control output impedance; and a second control means (means to generate TAP0 to TAP3) that controls a slew rate by controlling a drive signal of the output MOSFETS turned on, wherein the first and second control means are performing independently of each other.

The difference seen between Mooney et al. and the present invention is that the Mooney et al. does not show the detailed layout of the output MOSFETs as called for in claims 9-11. However, such layout in an integrated circuit is well known in the art to save space and reduce power consumption. Therefore, outside of non-obvious results, the obviousness of the detailed layout as called for in claims 9-11 will not be patentable under 35USC 103(a).

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 12-13 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

7. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Tuan T. Lam whose telephone number is 571-272-1744. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday (7:30 am to 6:00pm).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, TIMOTHY P. CALLAHAN can be reached on 571-272-1740. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Tuan T. Lam
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2816

4/8/2006